

ifmILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

unjust hatred, the most painful betrayals. And thus the humble and the wretched, feeling that they had lost a great friend, were now mingling their gratitude and their grief with the admiration of those who deplored the immense loss which had befallen literature.

It was particularly from the literary standpoint that M.

Abel Hermant next addressed the throng, and he did so ad-

mirably, setting forth both the characteristics and the limita-

tions of the genius of Zola, who had perhaps failed to show

sufficient penetration when dealing with the psychology of

certain individual characters, but who had excelled in depicting

what was called "the crowd." He had been a master in the

art of assembling facts and personages: his crowds and his

paintings of nature were full of life. And he had never

sought common popularity. He had sacrificed nothing in

order to curry favour with the multitude, as was done by

those who were eager for success at any price. Far from

flattering the masses, he had braved them, measured him-

self against them fearlessly, and not only in connection with

the terrible truths enunciated in his novels had a clamour of

anger and menace arisen around him. At last, passing to

his peroration,—a very appropriate one,—M. Hermant said:

"At the close of one of his finest works¹ Zola describes a ceremony such as this, one unattended by a great concourse of people, but none the less painful for the few friends pressing around the

remains of an unappreciated artist. On retiring from
the graveside
one of that artist's most notable companions, one
who resembles
Zola like a brother,³ speaks a few words, —words of
duty, comfort,
and hope. Those words are certainly the only
farewell that Zola
himself desires from us, gentlemen, and I should
feel I had failed

* "L'Qffiuvre."

^a Sandoz.